

Mr. LEE. I ask unanimous consent that I be given 2 additional minutes to wrap up my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEE. What all of this boils down to is that the core values, the core protections underlying the First Amendment are not just important, they are not just nice to talk about, they are at the very foundation of our representative democracy. They are at the very foundation of our Republic and how it operates. If this amendment were to pass, if this were to become part of the Constitution of the United States, Congress would become more powerful at the expense of the American people.

Ultimately this will inure to the benefit of the political establishment in Washington. It would inure to the benefit, perhaps, of two political parties but everybody else would suffer. It would be more difficult for more Americans to speak on issues that concerned them. Congress would have more power and the States would have more power to restrict the speech of the American people.

It has been said in the past that this is about restricting money, not speech. It is a little bit like saying a city ordinance prohibiting people from using either an automobile or a subway car to get to a protest rally isn't restricting their access to a protest rally or the right to participate in that protest rally.

When money is the means by which the American people can have the ability to express their concern on an issue voters are facing in an upcoming election, that should concern us all. This is an attempt to weaken the most fundamental components of our rights as U.S. citizens. I must, therefore, oppose Senate Joint Resolution 19 and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I know many Senators were back home over the last number of weeks talking to and listening to their constituents about issues on their minds. I was also at home. As a doctor and as a Senator, I heard from many people in my home State of Wyoming who have a lot of concerns about the health care law and the devastating side effects the law has on them.

Over the past few weeks there have been headlines just about every day all across the country with bad news about the health care law and its impact on the American people. Just this morning the local newspaper, *The Hill*, has a headline: "Support for ObamaCare continues to fall."

Public approval of ObamaCare continued to sink this summer, issuing the latest warning for vulnerable Democrats who will face voters this fall after backing the law.

It says that just 35 percent of voters now support the health care law. This

is a monthly poll done by the Kaiser Health Foundation which was released yesterday.

It says:

Healthcare remains one of the most important issues in midterm elections, ranking only behind the economy and jobs as voters' top issue.

I talk about health care repeatedly because I am a physician. I have taken care of patients for 25 years in my home State of Wyoming, and I have taken care of families from all around the State. They come to me with their concerns about the health care law.

President Obama says the Democrats who voted for the law should, as he said, "forcefully defend and be proud of the law." Is the President proud of the ways families across America are suffering because of his health care law and the dangerous side effects people continue to face?

Here is a headline from last Friday, September 5, front page of the *Wall Street Journal*. It says: "Hacker Breaches Part Of Federal Health Site." A computer hacker breached the Federal health site. The article says the hacker broke into part of the healthcare.gov Web site in July—in July—and uploaded malicious software, according to Federal officials.

The administration now admits it. It goes on to say that "the break-in raised concerns among Federal officials because of how easily the intruder gained access and how much damage could have occurred." This is a concern Republicans have warned about for a long time.

The Obama administration didn't do the basic things any business in America would have done to protect people and their personal information. According to this report, part of the problem in this case was that the Web site's developers never—and taxpayers have paid plenty to these developers—bothered to change a default password for the system. No one can believe it. Hackers didn't have to go around some complicated security system or break in through a back door. Oh, no. The Obama administration official admitted to the *Wall Street Journal* there was a door left open—a door left open.

The Obama administration said that so far the hackers haven't stolen anybody's personal information that they know of. Apparently, they didn't know about this breach for weeks. The hacker walked in through an open door in July, and the Obama administration didn't know anything about it until August 25. Healthcare.gov stores huge amounts of personal and private information about people, including their access information and their health care information, and people have a right to know the information is secure.

Where are the Democrats on the floor of the Senate today ready to forcefully defend leaving the door open for these hackers?

Here is another headline from the September 2 *New York Times*: "Brac-

ing for New Challenges in Year Two of Health Care Law."

We all remember how terrible the launch of the health care program was last fall. We remember right after the President sat down with Bill Clinton and he said: Oh, easier to use than Amazon, cheaper than your cell phone bill, and you can keep your doctor.

America knows those things weren't true.

We all remember the terrible launch last October. The new head of the exchange talked about what he expects it to be like this year, year two. They have had a full year now to get ready and fix the problems. Yet this Obama administration official just recently told the *New York Times*: "In some respects, it's going to be more complicated. Part of me thinks that this year is going to make last year look like the good old days."

America is not ready to go back to the Obama Web site good old days. That is what the Obama administration's person in charge of the health care exchange told the *New York Times*. Are the Democrats going to come to the floor and forcefully defend this kind of chaos and confusion with the health care enrollment for a second year in a row? It is another disgraceful side effect of the President's unworkable, unmanageable health care law.

I will give one more example of what the American people are learning about how the health care law is harming them individually. Insurance companies have been releasing their preliminary rates for 2015, and in many places for many people, premiums are going up. According to the consulting group PricewaterhouseCoopers, premiums are going up about 8 percent on average across the country. That is not what Democrats promised when they wrote the health care law. Democrats in Washington, here in the Senate, promised the rates would go down. President Obama went around the country and said people would see their health care costs go down by an average of \$2,500 per family per year. NANCY PELOSI went on "Meet the Press" and said rates will go down for everyone. That hasn't happened. Premiums have gone up. Copays are up. Deductibles have gone up. Out-of-pocket costs have gone up for millions of Americans.

As chairman of the Republican policy committee, one of the things I do is look around the country and try to find out how the policies that come out of Washington affect people all across the country. I have traveled over the past month and heard from many people that the President's health care law is hurting them individually and costing them more.

One place people are really being hurt by the health care law is Alaska. Here is a headline from *The Hill* newspaper on Monday: "Alaska insurance rates set to spike." According to the article, Alaskans buying health insurance through the State's exchange can expect a surprise spike of more than 30 percent on average.

Another place being hit is Iowa. PricewaterhouseCoopers says the average person in Iowa who buys health insurance through the exchange is going to pay 11.5 percent more next year in premiums. For others, premiums will be as high as 14 percent higher. Those Iowa families aren't getting a cut of \$2,500 as promised by the Democrats who voted for this health care law and as the President said. What they are getting instead is an increase of 14 percent—more money out of their pockets.

We can go round and round with individual stories. They are paying more. So it is no surprise then that today the headline in The Hill newspaper is that it is more unpopular now and continues to lose popularity.

Then the impact. It is astonishing. I picked up today's Investor's Business Daily. The headline is "ObamaCare Spurs College Blues For Working Students." A lot of students have to work their way through college. Page 1, above the fold, "ObamaCare Goes To College."

More than 200 colleges and universities—

This is because of the law, the way they define part-time work and full-time work, and full-time is defined as 30 hours.

"ObamaCare Goes To College."

More than 200 colleges and universities have restricted work hours for students, for part-time faculty, or both, citing the costs of complying with the employer mandate related to the President's health care law.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, what I do is come to the floor to talk about the concerns I have for Americans who are concerned about their jobs, concerned about the economy, concerned about their opportunity to get the care they need from a doctor they choose at a lower cost. They see all of these issues as troublesome under the President's health care law. So I am going to continue to talk about this and the impact this has on the American family. I am going to talk about restoring people's freedom to buy insurance that works for them and their families because they know what is best for them, not the Obama administration. I am going to talk about reforms that get people the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs. I am going to talk about giving people choices, not Washington mandates.

Republicans are going to keep offering real solutions for better health care without all of these tragic side effects. Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

AFFORDABLE HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to talk about a fair shot for

American families on quality, affordable higher education. It is very appropriate that the Senator from New Jersey is presiding because he has been one of the great leaders in the Senate on the affordability of higher education, and it has been a pleasure to work with him.

Let me go through some of the numbers because they are somewhat shocking. We have 20 million students who enter college every year, and 60 percent will exit with student debt. The majority of students who now attend college will have to borrow money in order to be able to get a college education. Thirty-seven million Americans today have college loans that are outstanding. Yes, we know some are young professionals and some are older people. I was surprised to learn that almost 8 million Americans over the age of 50 have college loans that are still outstanding. So this is a burden many American families will have for the rest of their lives.

The average debt today is \$29,000, and that number is rising dramatically every year. So when a student graduates, the average debt they carry is \$29,000. There is \$1.2 trillion in outstanding college loans—more than credit card debt.

As the Senator from New Jersey pointed out earlier today, the percentage of a family's disposable income they need in order to pay for a college education—which we need for global competition and for competition in this country—is far higher than any other industrialized country in the world by far, equaling almost 50 percent of disposable income. That is a shocking number. Education is the great equalizer, and for many American families it is out of reach because of the cost and the necessity to borrow money.

Let me get beyond the numbers for a moment and talk a little bit about the people. Last Thursday Senator MIKULSKI and I were on the campus of Bowie State University and UMBC. Bowie State is one of our historically Black colleges and universities in Maryland, located in Prince George's County. We had a chance to not only meet with Dr. Mickey Burnim, the president of Bowie State University, but with students as well around a table to talk about how they go about trying to arrange for scholarships and loans in order to be able to afford a college education.

Bowie State University is a good buy compared to other colleges; tuition is only around \$5,000. One would think those students are in good shape, but let me tell my colleagues about the realities.

Dr. Burnim was explaining to us that on the first day of school, many students who they thought would be enrolled were not enrolled. Why? Because they couldn't put together the total financial package in order to satisfy the tuition costs, so they were not formally enrolled.

I was talking to some students at that roundtable discussion who ex-

plained to me that there were students who showed up for the first day of class without the textbook because they couldn't afford the textbook. Now they are going to be behind before they even start because of the high cost of a college education.

Here we are at a State college, and the average debt held by a student graduating from Bowie is \$27,800—at a State college. That is a shocking number.

The same number, if we go through the same thing at UMBC—where the president is Dr. Freeman Hrabowski—one of the great universities of our country—they find so many tools to help their students with loans, scholarships, work-study programs, and the debt there is also over \$20,000 a year for their graduating seniors. It is affecting their ability to perform in college.

What do I mean by that? There are large amounts of debt they have to take care of. The students do everything they can to reduce their debt, so they work. In some cases they work more than one job and attend college. It affects their ability to perform and successfully complete college.

At Bowie State it takes about 6 years to do a 4-year program because the students are working and are having a hard time meeting the credit requirements.

In some cases I was told there are students who want to take a summer class because it was offered, it was needed for their major, and it would allow them to graduate in a more timely way, but they couldn't afford to take the summer class because the Pell grants aren't available in the summer-time.

I thank Senator HARKIN, the chairman of the committee of jurisdiction, for offering legislation that would correct that, that would allow for Pell grants to be available on a 12-month basis. That would help.

Yes, the effect of the high cost of education is first and foremost on the individual. Too many children are not going to college, too many children are not going to the college of their choice, and too many students are taking too many years to graduate because of the high cost of college. Too many students aren't going on to those advanced degrees because they have too much debt, they have to work, and they have to pay off their student loans.

Too many students don't have all the training they need in order to do the best for themselves, and it is affecting their ability to succeed economically. They are delayed in their career choices because of extra years of college, and it is affecting their ability to buy homes because they have student debt.

It is affecting our communities. There are less retail consumers than there would otherwise be. Yes, it is affecting our global competition; yes, we have to increase Pell grants; yes, we have to increase public support; and,